

A new *Prunum* species from Saba (Netherlands Antilles)

(Gastropoda; Marginellidae)

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ABSTRACT. In shallow waters at the island of Saba (Dutch Leeward Islands, West Indies), an unknown marginellid was collected by SCUBA diving. It is referred to the genus *Prunum*, but generic assignation on the basis of conchological characters only appeared to be difficult. The new taxon (*Prunum hoffi* n.sp.) shows characters in between those of several wellknown marginellid genera.

RESUME. Dans les eaux peu profondes de l'île de Saba (Petites Antilles, Iles sous le Vent), une espèce inconnue de marginellides a été récoltée en plongée. Elle est assignée au genre *Prunum*. Cependant, définir l'appartenance à un genre sur seule base de caractères conchyliologiques est très difficile. Le nouveau taxon, (*Prunum hoffi* n.sp.) présente des caractères intermédiaires entre ceux de différents genres bien connus de marginellides.

KEYWORDS: Gastropoda, Marginellidae, *Prunum*, West Indies, Caribbean, Saba.

INTRODUCTION

In February and March 1987 during a trip on board of the M.V. "Plancius", the first author had the opportunity to collect marine molluscs on several islands of the Lesser Antilles. Amongst them the "Unspoiled Queen of the Caribbean", the island of Saba, of which hardly anything is known of the marine malaco-fauna (COOMANS, 1958). During our sampling activities, Dr. Tom van 't Hoff, initiator of the STINAPA underwater parc project "SABA" was so kind to show us the best localities for sediment sampling. Molluscs and sediment samples were taken at four localities, in depth ranging from 10 to 30 m. In a sample from Ladder Labyrinth in Ladder Bay, an unknown marginellid was found. It is described as:

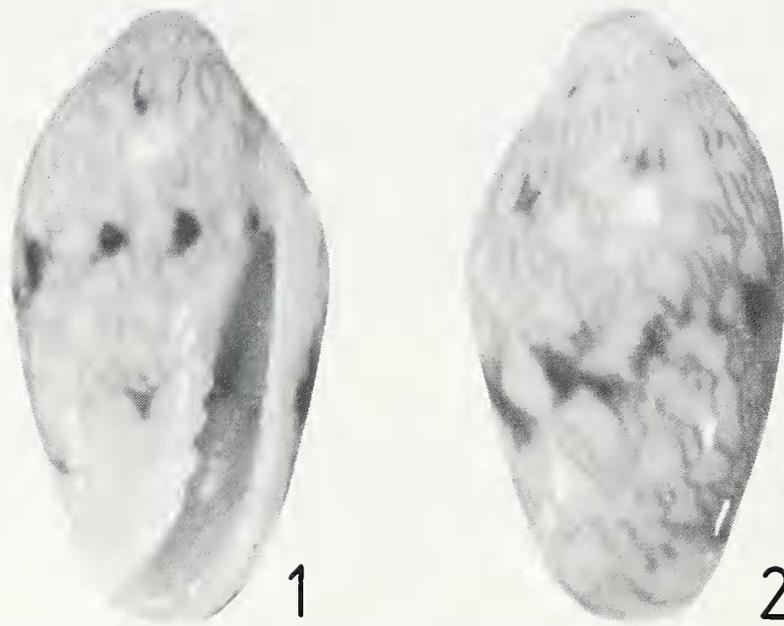
Prunum hoffi n.sp.

Figs 1-2

TYPE MATERIAL. Holotype (figs 1-2) in Zoölogisch Museum Amsterdam (ZMA Moll. 3.90.014) and 4 paratypes (3 in ZMA Moll. 3.90.015, one to Dayton Museum of Natural History, USA).

TYPE LOCALITY. West Indies, SABA, Ladder Bay, Ladder Labyrinth, 10-15 m, 11 March 1987, leg. R.G. Moolenbeek.

DESCRIPTION OF HOLOTYPE. Shell minute (length 3.6 mm, width 1.9 mm), thick, low biconic, oblong, semi-opaque, smooth, shiny, shoulder smooth. Spire blunt. Aperture narrow, rounded and broader anteriorly, length 2.8 mm.



Figs. 1-2. *Prunum hoffi* n.sp., Saba, holotype (ZMA Moll. 3.90.014), length 3.6 mm.

Nucleus of 1 1/2 semi-translucent whorls, with a fine brown sutural line. Two pale-white post-nuclear whorls with irregular (zigzag) axial brown stripes, and in between some more or less triangular pale-white markings. Suture filled with a pale opaque callus. On centre of body whorl a band of 8 dark brown spots. On shoulder and anterior part also a few irregular brown spots. Parietal callus white, with 4 plications of equal size, occupying half the inner lip. At the height of the upper columellar plica a very fine fasciolar groove. Outer lip opaque white, thickened, curved in medially, with 8 small denticles on the lower half. Edge of outer lip white, on border to the part with brown pattern, a minute axial groove (but not really forming an external varix).

VARIABILITY. The four paratypes measure 3.8 X 2.0 mm (Dayton Museum), 3.7 X 1.9 mm, 3.1 X 1.7 mm, 3.0 X 1.6 mm. The two smaller specimens are subadult with a thinner outer lip, and lacking denticles. In the smallest specimen the lower and

upper dark brown spots are more or less arranged into a spiral band.

ETYMOLOGY. This new marginellid is named after Dr. Tom van 't Hoff, to express our gratitude for his stimulating activities in nature conservation in the Carribean, and in particular in initiating the protection of underwater parcs in the Netherlands Antilles.

REMARKS. The generic placement in the family Marginellidae is still in a state of confusion. The genera *Prunum* Hermannsen, 1852, *Hyalina* Schumacher, 1817 and *Volvarina* Hinds, 1844 are closely related (COOVERT, 1987, 1988; COAN & ROTH, 1976) and especially the latter two are difficult to separate on conchological characteristics only. Due to the more solid shell, its relatively narrow aperture, its thicker outer lip with denticles inside, we place our new taxon in the genus *Prunum*. We do not know any species which shows a close resemblance

to the new species. The new taxa in the genus *Volvarina*, described by DE JONG & COOMANS (1988) differ all by being more elongate and uniform in colour (*Volvarina pauli*, *V. abbotti*) or having a banded pattern (*V. vokesi*). Also COAN & ROTH (1966) did not figure any species with the same kind of colour pattern. We do not know a West Atlantic *Prunum* species with a colour pattern of axial stripes and with the small size of our new taxon.

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*STUDIES ON WEST INDIAN MARINE MOLLUSCS: 20

